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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3985  
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 6866  
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 4211  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 8095  
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 5345  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2580  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 2732  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 3513  
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4676  
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 0104  
RUEHQH/AMEMBASSY QUITO 5211  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 001669

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TAGS: ECON PGOV PREL BL

SUBJECT: CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY: FISTS FLY, MILITARY ANGRY

REF: A. LA PAZ 1625

¶B. LA PAZ 1649

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Krishna Urs  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) On June 14, a small group of opposition (PODEMOS party) constituent assembly (CA) delegates was involved in a confrontation with police within the Colegio Junin, the site where the CA's twenty-one commissions are working. An opposition delegate told poloff on June 15, that the incident began when a few female opposition delegates formed a small protest group in the courtyard of the Colegio Junin. The group was protesting the Movement Towards Socialism's (MAS) proposal to create a "plurinational state" with autonomous indigenous territories as well as the MAS' strategy of using a simple majority rather than the agreed upon absolute majority to approve commission reports (reftel A). Other opposition delegates joined the protest. The expanded group then marched to the room where the commission "Vision of the Country" was meeting. Police blocked the protesters from entering the room despite the rule that commission proceedings are supposed to be open to the public. Shortly thereafter the police and the delegates came to blows. Poloff's contact within the commission states that the police was instructed by the MAS not to allow the protesters into the room.

¶2. (C) The main opposition party PODEMOS has decided to break-off discussions with the MAS, but will continue to attend commission working and voting sessions. Opposition CA delegates (with the exception of the UN party) are contemplating meeting in Santa Cruz on June 17, with opposition members of congress and the civic committees of the four eastern (pro-departmental autonomy) departments (reftel B). Proposed items on the agenda include discussions on how to mobilize large protests directed at the MAS.

¶3. (SBU) Trying to prevent a crisis between Bolivia's two security institutions, the Minister of Defense Walker San Miguel and Minister of Government Alfredo Rada sent a letter to the CA commission on Security and Defense asking the commission to defer to congress any issues that would generate controversy between the national police and the

armed forces. The letter was in response to the commission's proposal to eliminate some of the armed forces responsibilities under the new constitution. The commission's proposal would relegate the armed forces primarily to external security, while enhancing the role of the police. A major issue for the military is the proposal for the police to be the guarantor of the constitution rather than the armed forces as it stands in the current constitution. Military officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity to La Paz daily La Razon, have stated that the armed forces will not accept this diminished role. Of the seven commission delegates four are former or active police officers, while only one is former military.

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